



## PINWORM

### What are PINWORMS?

Pinworms are small, white, thread-like worms that live in the large intestine and only infect people. The female worms crawl out through the anus at night and lay eggs around the opening. This can cause intense itching in this area. Pinworms do **NOT** cause teeth grinding or bedwetting, as some people mistakenly believe. Pinworms are not dangerous, just very irritating.

### Who can get pinworms?

Anyone can get pinworms. School-aged children and preschoolers are most likely to get pinworms. Adults rarely get pinworms unless they are the parents of an infected child. If a child gets them, other family members can catch them.

### How do you catch pinworms?

When children scratch their bottoms, the eggs get on their hands and under their fingernails. The children may then touch someone else's mouth, food, toys or table. Someone else may get the eggs on their hands and eventually swallow them. Pinworm eggs hatch inside the intestines. It is very easy to spread pinworms around and catch them repeatedly.

### How do I know if my child or I have pinworms?

If you think someone has pinworms, ask the family doctor for an exam. The doctor may order a pinworm test (sometimes called a "Scotch tape" test) to detect the pinworm eggs. If the doctor finds pinworm eggs on the tape, the doctor will treat the patient and possibly the entire family for pinworms.

### How do I collect a "Scotch tape" test?

Follow the directions provided by your doctor. Since the adult worm comes out at night to lay their eggs, this test must be done first thing in the morning. Apply transparent adhesive tape over the anus before going to the bathroom or bathing. Then remove the tape from the anus and place the tape on the slides provided by the doctor. Return the slides to your doctor. A trained laboratory professional will look at the tape under a microscope. If there are pinworm eggs on the tape, the patient will be treated with a prescription.

### Is it necessary to treat my whole family?

This decision is up to your doctor. Your whole family may be treated because other people in the household may be infected, but are not aware of it.

### How can I keep from getting pinworms?

If your child or you have intense itching in the anal region, consult your doctor. Otherwise, always wash your hands and your child's hands carefully before eating or preparing food and after going to the bathroom.